



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/711,487	09/21/2004	Khamir Girish Joshi	04-11	5486
32583	7590	05/19/2008	EXAMINER	
KELLOGG BROWN & ROOT LLC ATTN: Christian Heausler 4100 Clinton Drive HOUSTON, TX 77020			SINGH, SUNIL	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3672	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			05/19/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/711,487	JOSHI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Sunil Singh	3672	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 February 2008.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 58-62 and 64-72 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 58-62, 64-72 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

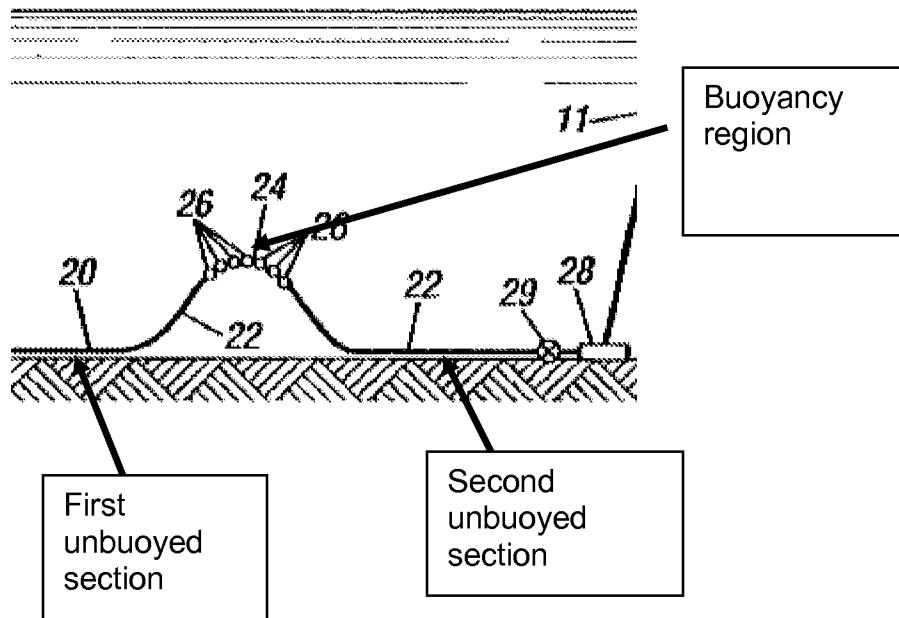
A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

- (a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.
- (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.
- (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.
- (e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

2. Claims 66-68,71,72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Richmond et al. (US 5582252)

Richmond et al. discloses a pipeline comprising a first unbuoyed section (see drawing below, Fig. 2), second unbuoyed section (see drawing below, Fig. 2), at least one buoyancy section (24,26) disposed between the first and second sections.



3. Claims 66-69,71,72 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Wipo '014. (WO 2004/068014).

Wipo '014 discloses a pipeline comprising a first unbuoyed pipeline section (2), a second unbuoyed pipeline section (3), at least one distributed buoyancy section (6,25,26) comprising two or more buoyancy solutions (36, see Figs. 1,5-7, col. 4 line 1).

4. Claims 58-59, 61-62, 64-65 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Wipo '014. (WO 2004/068014).

Wipo '014 discloses an apparatus (1) to traverse a seabed topographic feature comprising a subsea pipeline (1) constructed to carry fluids from a first location (this is considered as the left of Fig. 1) across the topographic feature to a second location (this is considered as the right of Fig. 1) wherein the topographic feature is selected from the group consisting of subsea, basins, domes, valleys, cliffs, canyons, escarpments and combinations thereof, said pipeline including at least one distributed buoyancy region (6,25,26) said pipeline comprising a first unbuoyed pipeline section (2) extending from said first location on a sea floor (4) to said distributed buoyancy region and a second unbuoyed pipeline section (3) extending from said distributed buoyancy region to said second location on a sea floor and said distributed buoyancy region connecting said first and said second pipeline sections in fluid communication. The two buoyancy solutions (36, see Figs. 1,5-7, col. 4 line 1) and the flexible positively buoyant inverse section is considered as the section where (36, see Figs. 1,5-7, col. 4 line 1

buoyancy members are positioned). Tether system (see Figures). First flexure (7) and second flexure (8).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claim 69 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richmond et al..

Richmond et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, Richmond et al. is silent about the buoy(26) being tethered. Tethered buoys are old and well known. It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Richmond et al. to make his buoys tethered buoys since such a modification is a design choice.

7. Claim 70 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richmond et al. in view of Moses et al. (Us 5615977).

Richmond et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, Richmond et al. is silent about the buoy(26) being a buoyant coating. Moses et al. teaches buoy being a buoyant coating (42, Fig. 3). It would have been considered obvious to one of

ordinary skill in the art to modify Richmond et al. to make his buoys in the form of buoyant coating as taught by Moses et al. since such a modification is a design choice. Such modification prevents rupturing.

8. Claim 60, 70 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wipo '014 in view of Moses et al. (Us 5615977).

Wipo '014 discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, Wipo '014 is silent about the buoyancy modules (see col. 4 line1) being a buoyant coating. Moses et al. teaches buoyancy modules being a buoyant coating (42, Fig. 3). It would have been considered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Wipo '014 to make his buoyancy modules in the form of buoyant coating as taught by Moses et al.. since such a modification is a design choice. Such modification prevents rupturing.

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed 2/12/08 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Richmond et al. fail to disclose a first unbuoyed section located subsea and extending from a first location on the seabed; a second unbuoyed section located subsea and extending from a second location on the seabed; and at least one buoyancy section disposed between the first and second unbuoyed section. The examiner disagrees. See illustration above of Figure 2 of Richmond et al.. Applicant argues that WO '014 teaches frame (25) and buoyancy members (36) act in concert, as a single, continuous unit to support pipeline (26) and that the frame (25)

cannot act independent of the buoyancy members (36); therefore, the combination of the frame (25) and the buoyancy members (36) are clearly a single unit. It should be noted that such limitation is far more limiting than the claimed subject matter. Claim 66 calls for "two or more discrete buoyancy solutions". Such limitation is met by members (36) and member (25) having buoyancy members (see col. 4 line 1). Applicant argues that members (36) are attached to frame (25) and not the outer diameter of the pipeline (26). First of all, such argument is far more limiting than the claimed subject matter.

Claim 66 does not require for the buoyancy solutions to be attached to the outer diameter of the pipeline. The claim only requires the buoyancy solution to be disposed about the at least one buoyancy section (pipeline). It should be noted frame (25) surrounds (26) and frame (25) comprises buoyancy members (36, see col.4 line1); therefore, such buoyancy solutions are disposed about an outer diameter of the pipeline (26). Applicant argues that the buoyancy solutions are not spatially arranged. The examiner disagrees. Members (36) and frame (25) having buoyancy members (see col. 4 line 1) are spatially arranged.

Applicant argues that WO '014 teaches frame (25) and buoyancy members (36) act in concert, as a single, continuous unit to support pipeline (26) and that the frame (25) cannot act independent of the buoyancy members (36); therefore, the combination of the frame (25) and the buoyancy members (36) are clearly a single unit. It should be noted that such limitation is far more limiting than the claimed subject matter. Claim 58 calls for "two or more discrete buoyancy solutions". Such limitation is met by members (36) and member (25) having buoyancy members (see col. 4 line 1). Applicant argues

that members (36) are attached to frame (25) and not the outer diameter of the pipeline (26). First of all, such argument is far more limiting than the claimed subject matter.

Claim 58 does not require for the buoyancy solutions to be attached to the outer diameter of the pipeline. The claim only requires the buoyancy solution to be disposed about the at least one buoyancy section (pipeline). It should be noted frame (25) surrounds (26) and frame (25) comprises buoyancy members (36, see col.4 line1); therefore, such buoyancy solutions are disposed about an outer diameter of the pipeline (26).

Conclusion

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sunil Singh whose telephone number is (571) 272-7051. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 10:30 AM - 7:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bagnell can be reached on (571) 272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

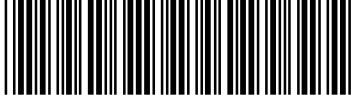
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Sunil Singh/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3672

Sunil Singh
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3672

SS

5/15/08

Application Number 	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent under Reexamination
	10/711,487 Examiner Sunil Singh	JOSHI ET AL. Art Unit 3672